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NEW TECHNIQUES IN THE PROCESSING OF VEGETABLE OILS AND FATS OF SPECIAL INTEREST FOR TROPICAL AREAS

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NEW TECHNIQUES IN THE PROCESSING OF VEGETABLE OILS AND FATS OF SPECIAL INTEREST FOR TROPICAL AREAS

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The climatic conditions prevailing in most tropical areas are especially suitable for the cultivation of several kinds of oliferous plants. Actually, the greater part of all vegetable oils and fats, which are mainly used for edible products but also have many technical applications - for instance, as a raw material for the manufacture of soap - is produced in tropical areas. Typical examples of such fats are coconut oil, palm oil and groundnut oil, but many others could be mentioned. However, up to the present the consumption of vegetable oils and fats has been greater in areas with temperate climates, and consequently large quantities of oil seeds have been exported to these areas, where the fats are extracted and processed in order to obtain marketable products. Due to the steady increase in the population of the tropical areas as well as the rising standard of living of the population, the trend in recent years has been to expand those industries which are able to produce locally marketable goods from raw materials indigenous to the tropical areas.

For the above reasons, vegetable oil refineries and soap plants are among the industries which are especially suitable for less developed tropical countries.

A short description is therefore given of modern techniques involving pressing, extraction and refining of vegetable oils and fats used to produce edible products such as salad oil, margarine and shortening. The principle of soap-making and modern equipment for the purpose is also described.

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